

CITY COUNCIL
COMMUNITY PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION
COMMITTEE MINUTES

December 9, 2015

The City Council Community Planning and Transportation Committee of the City of Norman, Cleveland County, State of Oklahoma, met at 4:03 p.m. in the Conference Room on the 9th day of December, 2015, and notice and agenda of the meeting were posted in the Municipal Building at 201 West Gray and the Norman Public Library at 225 North Webster 48 hours prior to the beginning of the meeting.

PRESENT:	Councilmember Allison, Miller, and Chairman Jungman
ABSENT:	Councilmembers Holman and Williams
STAFF PRESENT:	Mr. Jeff Bryant, City Attorney Ms. Susan Connors, Director of Planning and Community Development Ms. Sara Kaplan, Retail Marketing Coordinator Mr. Shawn O’Leary, Director of Public Works Ms. Syndi Runyon, Administrative Technician IV
OTHER GUESTS PRESENT:	Mayor Cindy Rosenthal Ms. Karleen Smith, Cleveland Area Rapid Transit (CART)

Item 1, being:

CLEVELAND AREA RAPID TRANSIT (CART) RIDERSHIP REPORT INCLUDING SAFERIDE AND EXTENDED SERVICE FOR THE MONTH OF OCTOBER, 2015.

Ms. Karleen Smith, Cleveland Area Rapid Transit (CART), highlighted the CART Ridership Report for October 2015, and said CART transported 153,446 passengers in October for a daily average of 6,935 riders. She said this increase is the result of added service on Main Street, Alameda Street, route adjustments to the Research Center on Highway 9 (providing lunchtime rides to Campus Corner), and encouragement to use the park and ride locations at Sooner Mall, Bethel Baptist Church, and Lloyd Noble Center. CARTaccess transported 2,890 passengers for a daily average of 126 riders.

Ms. Smith said CART worked with the University of Oklahoma (OU) Student Government Association on a transportation survey that was distributed to all OU students, staff, and faculty in November. The surveys asked how people are traveling whether it is walking, bicycling, driving vehicles, using transit, etc. CART also prepared an on-board transit survey for all CART routes that was distributed to all riders the last week of October to determine what other services the public would like CART to provide that is not currently being provided. In November, CART performed a route by route analysis to see how they could improve service and build ridership. Those survey results and route analysis data is expected to be available in January 2016.

Ms. Smith highlighted marketing and outreach programs that includes educating OU students on services available to them; creating a “Fill the Trolley” logo; creating a web story about “Fill the Trolley; printing large font schedules for sight-impaired passengers; purchasing ads in the Chamber of Commerce guide; placing ‘Hiring Immediately’ signs in all busses; developing a Bike Share Program; participating in the Transition Resource Fair at Moore-Norman Vo-Tech; and updating information for the Oklahoma Department of Transportation (ODOT) to place on their website.

Item 1, continued:

Chairman Jungman asked about the Bike Share Program and Ms. Smith said there has been a real interest in a Bike Share Program so CART is developing a Request for Proposal (RFP) to be released, at a undetermined date, for a third party to operate the program. She said OU discussed the program with the Norman Bicycle Advisory Committee (BAC) who was interested in a citywide program. She said at this time, OU plans to move forward with a trial program before discussing expansion.

Councilmember Miller asked where the best locations would be on Campus for picking up and dropping off bikes and Ms. Smith said there are not specific locations at this time. Ms. Sara Kaplan, Retail Marketing Coordinator, said companies that operate Bike Share Programs usually help in the process of determining locations. Chairman Jungman said the Committee would like to stay connected to that program because he understands the concept of starting small, but at the same time the program should not be so small that it is unsuccessful. He felt Campus Corner and Downtown Norman would be the most popular destinations for a bike share route.

Councilmember Allison said a partnership between OU and the City could lower costs as well as lower rates charged for the program. Ms. Kaplan said OU is aware the City is interested in exploring a partnership and she is fully in the loop of what is going on so she will be happy to keep the Committee updated. Chairman Jungman said if the program does not move forward he would like to know the reason why, such as cost prohibitive, to determine if the City can help in any way to make the program successful.

Items submitted for the record

1. Cleveland Area Rapid Transit Ridership Totals for the Month of October 2015
2. Cleveland Area Rapid Transit (CART) Monthly Report for October 2015

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Item 2, being:

DISCUSSION REGARDING MAXIMUM PARKING STANDARDS.

Chairman Jungman read a quote in the Staff memo which states, "One of the first questions to be answered in determining the best approach for the City of Norman to take in considering "parking maximums is what are we trying to solve?" He said that statement sums up his primary goal of getting something on paper about what the City is trying to address through the establishment of maximum parking standards.

Ms. Susan Connors, Director of Planning and Community Development, said the City of Norman Zoning Ordinance currently requires a minimum number of parking spaces to be provided, which has been the standard for many years in most zoning ordinances nationwide. She said as cities grew, off-street parking standards were developed in an attempt to minimize spillover parking on public streets and to ensure safe and efficient movement of traffic by requiring the supply of parking at the site of the development to be adequate to meet demand. She said if the City establishes maximum parking standards there needs to be other ways for people to get to their destination. She said maximum parking standards are typically based on three criteria as follows:

- Communities set a ratio per number of square feet of building area to establish a maximum
- Communities base the maximum on some aspect of the minimum standard, e.g., if one space is the minimum requirement, 1.5 spaces might be the maximum
- Maximum occurs when a municipality provides a limit on the overall number of parking spaces in a particular geographic area, e.g. a downtown or a historic district

Item 2, continued:

Councilmember Miller said there is a parking component to the Center City Visioning process and Ms. Connors said Center City's Form Based Code (FBC) reduces the amount of parking required, but does not require a maximum parking standard.

Ms. Connors said it is important to remember there are a variety of stakeholders in decisions regarding off-street parking requirements that include developers, business owners and their employees and patrons, community residents, and the general public who all have an interest in mobility as well as an attractive environment where vehicle traffic is not overwhelming.

Sources commonly used to determine off-street parking requirements include the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) and zoning ordinances from other communities. Ms. Connors said recent parking literature argues that excessive parking supply discourages alternative modes of transportation, reduces density, increases the cost of development, creates an uninviting built environment, and degrades the natural environment.

Ms. Connors said big businesses like Walmart and Home Depot build their parking lots to accommodate huge seasonal parking needs, but remain fairly empty most of the year. Councilmember Allison said it would be helpful to know how many parking spots these retailers have and how many they have to have minimally by Code to determine a gap. Are they building for Easter Sunday or are they truly building to Code? Ms. Connors said Staff can look at the site plan and count the spaces or go into the field and get a manual count and Councilmember Allison said he would like to see those numbers because he has heard the City's Code requires too much parking.

Ms. Connors said first the City needs to figure out what it is trying to solve by establishing maximum parking standards. Chairman Jungman said a good starting point is figuring out if businesses are overbuilding and where they are overbuilding. He said from speaking with developers, they would choose to build fewer parking spaces. He is concerned about spill over parking, but at the same time he is not convinced that is the right problem to chase because the developer has to build enough parking to make their property marketable. If a person cannot park at their apartment complex they will find another place to park, right? Councilmember Miller said that is true, but the issue is finding out how many spaces make it marketable. Is it one space per person or one and a half spaces per person? She said Council has heard the complaint before about the City requiring too many parking spaces per development. She said impervious surfaces create issues with storm water plus they are really ugly and not a good use of land.

Councilmember Allison said, being a business owner, he knows that if a business does not have adequate parking people will not come to the business so a smart business owner will build parking accordingly. He asked how the City would educate developers not to build too much. Ms. Connors said people have to drive to a business and a business will want to have as many parking spaces as people will come. Councilmember Allison said there is definitely a delicate balance to having space for building versus space for parking, but he believes the City has required more parking than is needed, which has hurt some businesses, but not others.

Councilmember Miller said the City needs to look at ways to reduce the numbers, but it has to be site specific and if the City is going to start putting in parking garages, which the City is talking about doing in some areas, that will make a big difference. If there is a parking garage downtown and a developer wants to build a parking lot what does the City say to that builder? She said there are a lot of different things happening right now that could impact development. Ms. Connors said there are no parking requirements in Downtown Norman and Campus Corner because they are zoned C-3, Intense Commercial District.

Item 2, continued:

Councilmember Allison asked if he is correct in saying that parking requirements are dictated by land use, not zoning and Ms. Connors said that is correct and C-3 is the most common zoning, which does not have parking requirements.

Councilmember Allison said he sees a lot of offices that have a lot of parking spaces, but not a lot of vehicles and Ms. Connors said office parking space is calculated differently based on use. She said, for example, churches can consist of a sanctuary, offices, classrooms, etc., and those uses are calculated differently because they are not all active at the same time. Councilmember Allison felt churches were the worst offenders because their parking lots are used twice a week and Councilmember Miller said her church is full every day due to activities offered.

Chairman Jungman said the motivating factor is core Norman, especially in R-3, Multi-Family Dwelling District, neighborhoods where the people density is starting to pick up because of the large four bedroom sized student housing apartments. If the City cannot do much about that type of development then one of the things that could make that area more livable is fewer cars because these areas are proposed to be walkable areas. If there were a maximum number of parking spaces per unit that would perhaps encourage builders to build one or two bedroom apartments, which attracts different type of individuals not just students and are more likely to be reused for something besides student housing. He said it would be a net win if the City could find some way to allow people density to increase while trying to keep vehicle density down. Councilmember Miller agreed and said that policy has worked well in the historic neighborhoods because they are not designed in any way to have four, five, or six cars. She said the fact that the Historic District (HD) has an overlay and guidelines have protected the area somewhat and she feels those same policy guidelines could be applied to certain core areas. Ms. Connors said there is nothing in the HD guidelines that prohibit parking and Councilmember Miller said that is true, but in the HD guidelines there are limits on what you can add and build. If people cannot build a large garage or widen their driveway then that limits and controls the number of cars. However, it does not prevent cars from parking on the street, which is a different issue altogether.

Chairman Jungman said he would like to see something done in Norman's core area. He said this is an opportunity for the City to adhere to some controlling factor and will help make a more walkable, livable area. He is encouraged to see other communities establishing maximum parking standards so Norman is not just going out on a limb in doing this.

Ms. Connors said even if the City is successful in controlling the number of bedrooms, people will still have cars and they will park on the street. Chairman Jungman said that is the next thing to think about and discuss. Ms. Connors said if duplexes and student apartments continue to be built with four bedrooms and four bathrooms, the City is gaining individuals that all have cars so the City is not really reducing the density of cars, the City is just reducing the on-site density of cars with this mechanism. Chairman Jungman said the guidelines would not be retroactive to include whatever is already built, but future development of these types of buildings in central Norman would be discouraged.

Councilmember Allison asked the definition of a dwelling unit and Ms. Connors said a kitchen, a bathroom, living space, and bedrooms. Councilmember Allison asked if a four bedroom apartment is considered one dwelling unit and Ms. Connors said yes. Chairman Jungman asked how many parking spaces are builders desiring for the four bedroom units and Ms. Connors said one parking space for every bedroom. Chairman Jungman said obviously developers have been able to do this within the impervious surface limitations and Ms. Connors said yes, they are always bumping right up to that 65%. Chairman Jungman asked if developers have ever expressed a desire to build fewer parking spaces or do they want to build one per bedroom, do we know? Ms. Connors said the City did not require them to build that many parking spaces so developers are the ones seeking those spaces.

Item 2, continued:

Councilmember Miller said four bedroom apartment units make it very convenient for people to break the City's "no more the three unrelated persons" law.

Councilmember Allison said if the City visits with builders about maximum parking standards developers will want to talk about the minimum standards as well and that would be opening a big can of worms. Chairman Jungman said he is okay with that. Councilmember Allison said the Committee just needs to realize that when that can is opened it is going to be huge undertaking for Staff. Chairman Jungman said he could not think of an economic use where an investor would not have their own minimum parking standard. Ms. Connors said most developers do not care where people park when lots are full.

Councilmember Allison asked if on-street parking should be permitted because some communities have residential permits for a minimal charge. He said residents are generally granted first spots in front of their house and if they did not take them then they are put up for grabs. He said this would prevent people from fighting over spots because people know they have a guaranteed spot. Chairman Jungman said on-street parking is not necessarily negative and even in some urban designs it is desirable to have some on-street parking, but that becomes an issue when areas are overrun by people that are commuting. Mayor Rosenthal suggested coupling permit parking with maximum standards because the City does not want the small developer to offer two parking spaces then build a bigger multiplex unit compelling cars to park on lawns, on the street, etc., causing issues within the neighborhood. Councilmember Allison said this type of problem is not limited to residential areas so when looking at parking the City needs to look at parking citywide.

Ms. Connors said the City's parking regulations are based on a sixty year old Code and it worries her to take one piece of that Code and try to update it without updating the entire Code. Councilmember Allison asked what the Code encompasses and Ms. Connors said the entire zoning laws. Chairman Jungman asked Ms. Connors what bad thing might happen if the parking regulation portion was the only thing updated and Ms. Connors said she did not have a particular problem in mind, but she has advocated for an updated Zoning Code since she started working for the City. Councilmember Allison said that is a huge endeavor and Ms. Connors agreed and said it would be a very huge, expensive endeavor and it is not a huge priority because there is not a huge groundswell of people saying this is a horrible document. Chairman Jungman said Planned Unit Developments (PUDs) is the new Zoning Code because much of what happens in development in Norman these days are PUDs.

Mayor Rosenthal asked if there is a particular zoning category the Committee is the most concerned about and Chairman Jungman said, for him, it is R-3 in central Norman because that is an area that should be walkable and could be more walkable. He said people density is growing and if the City allows the vehicle density to grow along with that there will be some negative outcomes. Mayor Rosenthal agreed and said this is a core area problem that leads to all kinds of uncertainty for people who live there and creates other problems, but rather than changing parking standards maybe the City should do something about R-3 zoning. She wondered if piggybacking a change of R-3 with the FBC would apply some of these concepts the Committee is concerned about.

Ms. Connors said the City is getting ready to begin a Comprehensive Plan that may nullify how the City is developed. The purpose of the Comprehensive Plan should be to look at redevelopment and whether the City wants to take some control over that redevelopment. She said the FBC is an Overlay District (overlay), but will not be mandatory so the City might want to look at more mandatory regulations to really redirect growth. Chairman Jungman said if the overlay is not mandatory and mandating a four bedroom prohibition is a problem then why can't the City prohibit it as a recommendation and say it is just not preferred? Mayor Rosenthal said it is the City's prerogative to just say no. She knows where Chairman Jungman is going with

Item 2, continued:

this, but the City has an oversupply of housing that is targeted for a market the City does not want or need more of so the simplest answer is to just say no. Chairman Jungman said the City needs the ability to do that, which it does not have right now. Ms. Connors said that is true, if the zoning is right for what developers want to build the developer does not have to follow the overlay. She said the City is making it a little harder for development in the Center City area by requiring builders to submit site plans if they are not following the FBC. If they want a zoning change, Staff will need to develop a new category called Center City PUD and that has to be done because the open space requirements in the current PUD standards will not work in this area.

Ms. Connors said the Center City FBC could be easily and quickly expanded, but that process would have to include public hearings. Councilmember Miller felt this would be popular with a number of residents who have voiced concerns about redevelopment in their neighborhoods. Chairman Jungman said, from what can see, four bedrooms over four bedrooms (four by fours) on two floors would fit into the FBC. Ms. Connors said the City has not had a test case yet, but the FBC does have required build lines, required parking lines, landscaping requirements, and open space so when you put all that together that scenario may not be possible. She would need to find an architect that will work with her to try to put together some examples. She said City Council will have a lot of control over what they say yes to and Chairman Jungman was concerned the development would not get to Council. Ms. Connors said anything that does not follow FBC has to go to City Council with a site plan. Chairman Jungman said allowing less parking could put a damper on some of the interest of four by four units, but he fears those developments could be done without being approved by Council. Councilmember Miller agreed something needs to be done, but did not see an easy answer.

Mayor Rosenthal said during the Center City Steering Committee discussions it was suggested that four by four units be prohibited because they are basically private dormitories. She suggested the Code be amended to prohibit dormitories and Chairman Jungman felt that was a great idea and said that could encourage one bedroom, one bath development instead. Mayor Rosenthal said a one bedroom one bath unit would have to have a kitchen and the cost to develop that would become huge.

Ms. Connors said Staff will need to do some research and create a definition for dormitories.

Chairman Jungman summarized the discussion as expanding City Center FBC to catch all the R-3 zoning and prohibiting dormitory use. He said the parking maximum requirement can be pushed into the background, but the Committee may want to review that at a later time. He asked if Staff could have a definition and FBC expansion boundaries for the Committee's review in January and Ms. Connors said she would do her best.

Items submitted for the record

1. Memorandum dated December 4, 2015, from Susan Connors, AICP, Director of Planning and Community Development, to Community Planning and Transportation Committee Members with Exhibit A, Examples of Parking Standards – Minimums and Maximums
2. Article entitled, "Establish Parking Maximums" from the City of Portland, Oregon
3. "The High Cost of Minimum Parking Requirements," Chapter 5 of Transport and Sustainability, Parking Issues and Policies, by Donald Shoup
4. Driving Urban Environments: Smart Growth Parking Best Practices, A publication of the Governor's Office of Smart Growth, Annapolis, Maryland

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Item 3, being:

MISCELLANEOUS PUBLIC COMMENTS.

Mr. Jeff Hughes said in 1992, Kaighn Associate Architects was hired to provide a transition plan to comply with the Americans with Disability Act (ADA) and that plan needs to be made a priority for updating. He said Mr. Shawn O'Leary, Director of Public Works, told him the City was establishing an Accessibility Committee to develop a new transition plan and asked what will happen if that Committee does not come to fruition. How will the City obtain feedback or complaints from citizens with disabilities? He said there currently is no effective process for anything to occur and if a complaint is filed with the federal government the City of Norman could face some significant repercussions. How asked how he could help get this discussion started? How can the community help get this process going? He said discussion needs to include housing, transportation, program access, recreational opportunities, etc. He said a lot of components were missed in the original plan because no one really knew what needed to go into a transition plan, but it is now 25 years later and it is time to act on updating this plan.

Mayor Rosenthal said she is not making excuses, but the biggest issue right now is the May storm damages the City is dealing with to get roads, bridges, and other infrastructure repaired or replaced. She said the Public Works Department is somewhat overwhelmed right now with those projects plus handling Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) paperwork for funding, which can be time consuming alone. Chairman Jungman said the City is definitely short staffed right now.

Mr. O'Leary said Staff is preparing a contract to have the plan updated, which will be a nine to twelve month process and citizen engagement will be a huge part of that process. Staff is hoping to begin the process in the spring of 2016.

Councilmember Allison said going forward, Council needs to ensure that all Norman Forward projects meet ADA criteria. Mayor Rosenthal agreed and said every neighborhood park project needs to have ADA criteria.

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The meeting adjourned at 5:06 p.m.